

NEBRASKA STATE FIRE MARSHAL OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION



Interpretation Number: 97-05

Date: 01 February 2007

Pamphlet Number: NFPA 101, 2000 Edition;
Title 156, State of Nebraska Accessibility Guidelines

Section(s): 7.5.4; 4.3.11

Comments:

Accessible means of egress and areas of refuge. Ruling based on Title 156 and NFPA requirements.

Question: What are the requirements for an accessible means of egress? How must an area of refuge be used in an accessible means of egress?

Response: Handicap accessible means of egress are required in the same number as required by local building and fire codes. An accessible means of egress shall be considered: 1) an accessible route of a minimum 36" wide which leads to and continues through an exit to a public way; 2) an elevator which complies with ASME/ANSI 17.1 located in a shaft system and approved for firefighter service within an accessible route and directly accessed from an area of refuge; or 3) an exit stairway within an accessible route with a minimum 48" between handrails which is directly accessed from an area of refuge.

Every area of refuge shall have direct access to an exit stairway or elevator and have

clear space to accommodate at least one wheelchair. An additional clear space will be required for every 200 occupants on a particular level based on the occupant load factor of local building and fire codes. Clear spaces shall not obstruct required egress widths. The area of refuge shall be separated from other building spaces by a smoke barrier and a minimum one-hour fire-resistive construction. Openings, such as doors or windows, shall be minimum 45 minute rated and automatic or self-closing Smoke dampers shall be properly provided within ductwork.

Two-way communication with visual and audible signals shall be tied to a central control point for emergency communications. Instructions for use of and action taken within the area shall be placed adjacent to the communication controls. Signage inside the area shall give one's location within the building and "AREA OF REFUGE" signage designating the area both inside and outside shall be provided. Where exit signage is required to be illuminated, signage outside the space shall also be illuminated.

Accessible means of egress and/or areas of refuge will be required in new multi-level

buildings on levels required to be handicap accessible. Areas of refuge are not required in existing or altered buildings, on building levels not required to be handicap accessible or buildings completely protected by a fire-sprinkler system.

Signature: *John E. Falgione*

Date: 02/01/07

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